To: Smith, Paula[Smith.Paula@epa.gov]
From: Mathew, Jacklyn
Sent: Wed 8/12/2015 5:00:05 PM
Subject: Fwd: Updated Responses to Inquiries

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Begin forwarded message:

From: "Fritz, Matthew" <Fritz.Matthew@epa.gov>
Date: August 12, 2015 at 10:33:36 AM MDT
To: "Herckis, Arian" <Herckis.Arian@epa.gov>, "Reynolds, Thomas" <Reynolds.Thomas@epa.gov>, "Mathew, Jacklyn" <Mathew.Jacklyn@epa.gov>
Subject: Updated Responses to Inquiries

Arian, Tom and Jackie,

Here is the latest and possibly last installation of updates. This can be printed for her and maybe we can have Shaun provide it to her in the vehicle.

Thanks.

Chronology and notifications:

Chronology will come as a separate document

# of EPA staff/contractors engaged in the response (both on the ground/ and in the regions and HQ):

Region 8 = 76 (combined EPA employee/contractors)

Region 6 = 71 (combined EPA employee/contractors)

Region 9 = 15 (combined EPA/contractors)

All told, hundreds of EPA employees and contractors are at work in response to this incident. More than 100 on the ground in Colorado and New Mexico and hundred more providing direct support in the regions, labs and headquarters – working on analytical work, research, mapping, etc.

Navajo Dam release: when, how much, frequency

August 7 – Bureau of Reclamation increased water releases from the Dam from 650 to 1,300 cfs to help with dilution

(The dam is on the San Juan River – east of Farmington on Navajo Lake)

Toll-free # (for all area impacted by the release):

Toll-free #: 1-844-607-9700 – it is now "live" (English, Spanish and soon Navajo available).

There will be a live person answering the phone to take concerns, sampling requests and follow up requests. These logs will be distributed to us and R 8 & 9 daily in the am. It will also be posted on the website this AM, www.epa.gov/goldkingmine

Contact information for response partners:

ATSDR's information is posted on the website – along with the name of the appropriate official to contact

Other supporting agencies – such as state fish and wildlife – are listed on the site (no contact information – ideally, one would work through the Unified Command to connect with the individuals associated with the response)

Information on how to submit claims is on the website. Additional work over the next couple of days will involve establishing "centers" in the various communities to make the system for submitting a claim easier.

Process to analyze data:

As agreed to by HQ EOC, UAC, Regions 6, 8 and 9, the regional EOC environmental units (EU) will follow the data format used during the Deepwater Horizon response (since staff were also involved in that response, this format will be familiar to them) and will conduct validation on data collected and analyzed during the response. The process will be expedited for data validation by having each environmental unit in each of regional EOCs validate and then send such data with interpretations to UAC simultaneous with HQ EOC. UAC would review the data and interpretation with all participants in UAC, HQ EOC would simultaneously review the data and work with UAC on final interpretation. ORD is engaged in this process. Messaging would be developed through PIO working in coordination with PIO in HQ EOC. Once completed data and interpretation/messaging would be conveyed through UAC. Data displays for key chemicals of concern, GIS overlays, and a color coding chart will be part of the data packages. The UAC PIO will post the data on the EPA Gold King Mine website. Notification prior to posting will be made via the UAC to States, Tribes, and congressional contacts and the HQ EOC. Trending messages will also be developed once there is sufficient data for the analysis.

pH values in Cement Creek:

As of August 11 (Tuesday), the pH value for the discharge from Cement Creek was 5.5 – consistent with pre-existing conditions

Single point of contact:

David Ostrander – Incident Commander working out of the Unified Area Command in Durango

Mr. Ostrander earned a Bachelors Degree in Geological Engineering from Colorado School of Mines. He worked for 9 years in the oil and mining industries before joining EPA Region 8 in 1991. David has worked as a Remedial Project Manager in Superfund, served as Brownfields Coordinator for 4 years, spent 3 years in the regional lab as Lab Director and has been the Director of the Emergency Response and Preparedness Program in Region 8 for nearly 10 years and serves as the Region 8 Regional Response Team (RRT) co-chair. He has overseen several high profile emergency responses in Region 8 and supported EPA HQ during Hurricane Sandy.

Mark Hayes – Federal On-Scene Coordinator coordinating the response in the New Mexico/Farmington area

Plan to provide water in NM:

EPA is providing water to livestock in the vicinity of the San Juan River. The county (San Juan) was supporting this effort over the weekend and EPA assumed that responsibility on Monday, August 10 and we have completed 4 distributions through Tuesday.

Testing – we are providing water quality testing services for private well owners.

San Juan County Office of Emergency Management has established portable drinking water stations in various locations throughout the county.

Navajo Nation – Region 9 is paying for water hauling services to deliver water to areas impacted by the discharge.

Mobile Lab in NM:

NO mobile lab in NM – Region 6 stood up a sample process center on East Apache Street. In addition, they have deployed a mobile command post. The mobile lab couldn't run all the parameters necessary to evaluate the water quality. Samples are being shipped to an offsite laboratory for analysis.

Addressing other mines in the area:

Colorado – 3 active mine assessment/clean-up projects underway including Gold King Mine; Region is poised to initiate 3 other mine assessments

Long-term clean up strategy:

EPA is in the process of developing a long-term clean-up strategy. The primary focus is on the on-going response and ensuring conditions within the rivers have improved to pre-event conditions – allowing the rivers to be opened back up for recreational uses, the provision of water for drinking and agricultural purposes.

A long-term strategy would include a scientifically-based approach for future monitoring—that is monitoring that is done after the emergency response transitions to environmental monitoring—will be developed to track ecosystem status or recovery if there have been adverse impacts. The monitoring plan will identify decisions that are to be made and what data is necessary to make these decisions. The plan will denote several locations for sampling sediments and water throughout the impacted river system, including the Animas and San Juan Rivers. EPA will use the available historical pre-blowout data for sediment and water to serve as a baseline or reference point to address the question on whether any impacts from the blowout have passed. The monitoring plan will be designed to address this question and other decisions important to EPA, states, tribes and the public. The plan will be initially implemented over several weeks and will be updated based on input from stakeholders. The comparison of the monitoring results to pre-incident data will be a critical determinant for decision-making.